

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LISBON 01120 221708Z

67

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-16 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-14 MC-02 ACDA-19

AID-20 IGA-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /195 W
----- 057090

R 221600Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9321

INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

CINCUSAREUR

CINCUSAFE LINDSEY AS

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB

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PAGE 02 LISBON 01120 221708Z

CINCUSNAVEUR

CINCLANTFLT
DIA
USCINCEUR
USCOMFORAZ
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1120

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PGOV PO
SUBJ: POLITICAL SITUATION IN PORTUGAL

REFS: (A) LISBON 1021; (B) USDAO/LISBON IR 6 879 0082 74 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: POLITICAL SITUATION IN PORTUGAL REMAINS TENSE AS GOP SEEKS TO GIRD AGAINST FURTHER PROTESTS FROM MILITARY BY ARRESTS, TRANSFERS, OR FIRINGS OF OFFICERS OF QUESTIONABLE LOYALTY. SEVERAL INFORMED SOURCES PREDICT DEFENSE MINISTER WILL BE SACKED SOON. TOP GOP OFFICIALS STICKING TO IMPECCABLE GENERALITIES IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS, AND GENERAL SPINOLA HAS PLAYED DOWN IMPORTANCE OF HIS DIFFERENCES WITH GOP. MIDDLE-LEVEL MILITARY OFFICERS REPORTEDLY STILL DISGRUNTLED. CLOUD REMAINS OVER GOP'S OVERSEAS POLICY. END SUMMARY.

1. IN WAKE OF REVOLT AND MARCH ON LISBON OF INFANTRY UNIT AT CALDAS DA RAINHA (LISBON 1021) MARCH 16, PORTUGUESE MILITARY AND SECURITY POLICE HAVE MADE NUMBER OF ARRESTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL MILITARY OFFICERS IMPLICATED IN REVOLT OR SUSPECTED OF DISLOYALTY. GOP SPOKESMAN HAS STATED THAT 33 OFFICERS ARE IN CUSTODY. SOME SOURCES SAY ARRESTS ARE CONTINUING. ONE JOURNALIST CLOSE TO MIDDLE-LEVEL MILITARY SAYS OVER 80 OFFICERS ARE IN CUSTODY. ADM. ANTONIO TIENO BAGULHO WAS AS DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF OF ARMED FORCES WAS DIRECT SUBORDINATE OF SPINOLA'S, HAS ALSO BEEN SACKED. GENERAL AMARO ROMAO, HEAD OF MILITARY ACADEMY (WHERE MEETING OF OVER 100 MIDDLE-LEVEL OFFICERS TOOK PLACE NIGHT OF MARCH 15-16) HAS BEEN FIRED AND HAS BEEN REPLACED BY
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PAGE 03 LISBON 01120 221708Z

GENERAL PAIS BRANDAO, PREVIOUSLY CHIEF OF CABINET OF MINISTER OF ARMY PAIVA BRANDAO. SEVERAL UNEXPECTED TRANSFERS OF MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE ALSO BEEN REPORTED IN PAST WEEK. (SEE REF (B) FOR DETAILS).

2. NEW ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF GEN JOAQUIM LUZ CUNHA HAS MADE NO PUBLIC STATEMENT SINCE HIS ARRIVAL IN LISBON ON MARCH 19 AND HAS NOT YET BEEN SWORN IN.

3. PROMINENT MEMBER OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WHO HAS EXCELLENT CONTACTS AT HIGHEST LEVEL IN MILITARY TOLD AMBASSADOR ON MARCH 21 THAT CONSERVATIVE CIVILIAN MINDEFENSE SILVA CUNHA WOULD BE FIRED SOON, AS RESULT OF HAVING AUTHORIZED PUBLICATION OF SPINOLA'S BOOK. OTHER SOURCES IN LISBON HAVE SAME STORY. NAME MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED AS SILVA CHUNA'S SUCCESSOR IS PERSONABLE BUT HARDLINE, RIGHTWING GENERAL KAULZA DA ARRIAGA, VASTLY UNDEREMPLOYED HEAD OF PORTUGAL'S NUCLEAR ENERGY BOARD.

4. LIBERAL NEWS WEEKLY EXPRESSO MARCH 16 GAVE FRONTPAGE SPACE TO REPRINT FROM GOVERNMENT GAZETTE OF CITATION, SIGNED BY PRESIDENT THOMAZ AND PRIME MINISTER CAETANO LAST SUMMER, WHICH AWARDED NATION'S HIGHEST DECORATION TO SPINOLA. CITATION WAS EFFUSIVE IN PRAISE OF SPINOLA. (SINCE EXCERPTS FROM GOVERNMENT GAZETTE MAY BE REPRINTED WITHOUT BEING CENSORED, CENSORSHIP BOARD DID NOT SEE PIECE BEFORE IT HIT NEWSSTANDS). EXPRESSO OFFICIAL HAS TOLD EMBOFF MARCH 16 EDITION HAS BEEN SEIZED BY POLICE IN ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE (COPIES OF FRONT-PAGE BEING MAILED TO CONGENS LUANDA AND LOURENCO MARQUES) AND EXPRESSO MUST NOW SEND FULL-PAGE PROOFS TO CENSORS. INFORMATION SECRETARIAT HAS THREATENED LAW SUIT AGAINST EXPRESSO FOR "ABUSE OF PRESS FREEDOM".

5. DISSATISFACTION WITH CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS REPORTEDLY CONTINUES AMONG LARGE NUMBER OF MIDDLE LEVEL MILITARY OFFICERS. WE UNDERSTAND SMALL GROUPS OF SUCH OFFICERS CONTINUE CLANDESTINE MEETINGS ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT VERIFY THIS. LONG STATEMENT ISSUED BY "THE MOVEMENT" IS CIRCULATING CLANDESTINELY IN LISBON. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 LISBON 01120 221708Z

STATEMENT MAKES SPINOLA-TYPE ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL AND MILITARY SITUATIONS IN PORTUGAL AND OVERSEAS AND CALLS FOR SOLUTIONS SIMILAR TO SPINOLA'S PROPOSALS. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO REBELLIOUS OR THREATENING LANGUAGE IN DOCUMENT. ANOTHER DOCUMENT CIRCULATING WITH THE FIRST STATES THAT "SOME OF OUR COMRADES HAVE BEEN ARRESTED...FOR BELONGING TO THE OFFICERS' MOVEMENT". STATEMENT SAYS, "WE SHALL NOT PERMIT, EVIDENTLY, SUCH A SITUATION TO CONTINUE...WE ARE WAITING FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO RECONSIDER..." THIS DOCUMENT CALLS ON ALL MILITARY UNITS TO EXPRESS THEIR SUPPORT AND SOLIDARITY. IT IS CLEAR THAT A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER, ALTHOUGH PROBABLY NOT A MAJORITY, OF THE MIDDLE LEVEL OFFICERS IN METROPOLE ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THIS MOVEMENT.

6. COMMENT: PORTUGAL IS OUTWARDLY CALM AT THE MOMENT
BUT POLITICAL SITUATION IS STILL TENSE.
SCOTT

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